

DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 194 846

CG 014 787

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TITLE Gender and Sex Role as Factors in Person Perception.
PUB DATE 31 Aug 78
NOTE 19p.: Paper presented at the Annual Convention of the American Psychological Association (88th, Montreal, Quebec, Canada, September 1-5, 1980).
EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Affective Behavior; *Androgyny; Attitudes; *Attribution Theory; College Students; Congruence (Psychology); Identification (Psychology); Individual Characteristics; Interpersonal Attraction; *Personality Traits; *Role Perception; *Sex Differences; *Sex Role

ABSTRACT

Role theory predicts that when expectations are disconfirmed, the perception of persons who do not conform to the stereotypes may be distorted. To investigate the evaluation of sex-typed behavior in males and females, male and female college students (N=120) read about one of four persons described as either a man or woman in either a masculine or feminine role. Subjects completed likability, desirability, similarity, and trait attribution ratings; they also provided information about their attitudes toward the roles of men and women. Results indicate that femininity was perceived as more attractive than masculinity. The feminine characters were rated as more likable and more desirable, and were described with more positive and fewer negative traits than the masculine characters. Male and female subjects differed sharply in their evaluation of sex roles when the stimulus was a man but gave similar ratings when the stimulus was a woman. Males with liberal sex-role ideologies devalued the masculine role. Females liked all stimulus persons more and attributed more flattering traits than did males. (Author)

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GENDER AND SEX ROLE AS FACTORS IN PERSON PERCEPTION

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Abstract

Male and female college students ($n = 120$) read a description about one of four persons, who were described as men or women in masculine or feminine roles. Subjects then completed likability, desirability, similarity, and trait attribution ratings; they also provided information about their attitudes toward the roles of men and women. It was predicted from role theory that individuals exhibiting in-role behavior (the masculine man and feminine woman) would be evaluated more favorably than individuals exhibiting out-of-role behavior (the masculine woman and feminine man). Although the two sex roles were significantly different, the prediction was not confirmed. Contrary to previous studies, femininity was perceived as more attractive than masculinity. The feminine characters were rated more likable and more desirable than the masculine characters; they were also described with more positive and fewer negative traits than the masculine characters. Male and female subjects differed sharply in their evaluation of sex roles when the stimulus was a man but gave similar ratings when the stimulus was a woman. Males with liberal sex-role ideologies devalued the masculine role. Females liked all stimulus persons more and attributed more flattering traits than males did. Results were discussed in the context of research on sex bias, changing sex-role stereotypes, and a ceiling effect on sex-role ideology.

Paper presented at the meeting of the American Psychological Association, Toronto, Canada, August 31, 1978.

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Gender and Sex Role as Factors in Person Perception¹

Largely under the impetus of Goldberg's (1968) classic study on sex bias, much recent research in social perception has addressed itself to factors influencing the evaluation of performance of men and women. Is sex of performer a basis for social evaluation that in turn colors the impressions one forms of another? How do individuals use this and other information (e.g., sex role, sex of perceiver, etc.) to infer more enduring personality characteristics? What other aspects of social evaluation are affected by sex-related factors? A number of investigators have sought answers to these questions by assuming that sex-role stereotypes influence the evaluation of the target performance. It seems logical to propose, for example, that behavior of an adult which is linked with one sex more than the other affects the perception of the adult's likability and personality. The present study was designed to investigate this issue in conjunction with the effects of performer and sex of perceiver.

The question of whether an observer attributes the same ability or personality on the basis of the same performance in a man and a woman has been examined extensively (Baruch, 1972; Bem & Bem, 1970; Clifford & Walster, 1972; Cline, Holmes, & Werner, 1977; Deaux & Emswiller, 1974; Deaux & Taynor, 1973; Dipboye, Arvey, & Terpstra, 1977; Feinman, 1974; Garske, 1972; Gold, 1972; Goldberg, 1968; Meyer & Sobieszek, 1972; Pheterson, cited in Pheterson, Kiesler, & Goldberg, 1971; Pheterson et al., 1971; Rothbart & Maccoby, 1966; Taynor & Deaux, 1975; Walster, Cleary, & Clifford, 1970). The majority of experimenters show that the male is evaluated more favorably than the female when the task is sex neutral or masculine and the presented evidence is identical (Bem & Bem, 1970; Clifford & Walster, 1972; Deaux & Emswiller, 1974; Deaux & Taynor, 1973; Dipboye et al., 1977; Goldberg, 1968; Pheterson et al., 1971; Walster et al., 1970). Several investigations (Cline et al., 1977; Gurwitz & Dodge, 1975; Rothbart & Maccoby, 1966) indicate that favorable reactions occur when the perceiver and the performer are the opposite sex, but Meyer and Sobieszek (1972) found the most favorable description occurs when the perceiver and the performer are the same sex. Most evidence shows, however, that sex of perceiver is not a significant factor in the evaluation process (Bankiotes & Bankiotes, 1972; Deaux & Emswiller, 1974; Deaux & Taynor, 1973; Dipboye et al., 1977; Meyer & Sobieszek, 1972). Spence and Helmreich (1972a) suggest that sex-role ideology of the perceiver may also influence the evaluation of male and female performance.

Role theory predicts that when expectations are disconfirmed, the perception of persons who do not conform to the stereotypes may be distorted (Jones, Davis, & Gergen, 1961; Sarbin & Allen, 1968). Several investigators (Garske, 1972; Gurwitz & Dodge, 1975; Jones et al., 1961; Meyer & Sobieszek, 1972) have speculated that there is a contrast effect in the evaluation of sex-typed behavior, where the

¹This paper is a revised version of one submitted in partial fulfillment of program requirements for the PhD degree in social psychology at the University of Michigan. The author most gratefully acknowledges the assistance of James S. Jackson, Robert B. Zajonc, and Patricia B. Gurin in critically reviewing earlier drafts. The author also wishes to thank Sandra L. Bem for her assistance in designing and implementing the study. The author conceptualized this study and collected the data while a senior at Stanford University; the results were analyzed and the manuscript completed while at Michigan.

behavior of a person opposite in sex to the sex-role stereotype becomes cognitively salient and is recalled as departing even more from the sex role than was actually the case. Meyer and Sobieszek (1972, p. 43) have observed, for example, that "women in leadership positions seem to be permitted much less initiatory behavior before being defined as 'too aggressive.'" The perception of sex-typed behavior in a person acting contrary to sex-role stereotypes, then, is likely to be distorted so that the evaluation of the person is unfavorable and exaggerated (Garske, 1972, pp. 32-33, 37, 124; Jones et al., 1961, p. 306).

The purpose of this study was to investigate the evaluation of sex-typed behavior in males and females. An experiment was designed in which stimulus persons were portrayed in a masculine or feminine role performance. The behavior of the stimulus person by virtue of a male or female name was described as consistent with either the masculine or feminine pattern, thus creating two experimental treatments where the person's behavior was "in role" and two treatments where it was "out of role" (Jones et al., 1961, p. 303). The general hypothesis prompting the study was that in-role individuals (masculine men and feminine women) would be more favorably evaluated than out-of-role individuals (masculine women and feminine men); however, atypical sex stereotypes influenced this prediction.

It was expected that evaluation of the four stimulus persons would vary with the sex role, the sex of performer, and the sex of perceiver. Consistent with role theory and research, particularly one study (Jones et al., 1961), it was hypothesized that in-role individuals would be rated more likable than their out-of-role counterparts. The sex-role ideology of the subject was expected to influence the likability of out-of-role individuals. It was also expected that subjects would rate in-role characters as more similar to themselves but less desirable than out-of-role characters, who have the idealized combination of masculine and feminine qualities (Dufresne, 1972; Garske, 1972). Finally, it was predicted that individuals would more positively describe in-role persons than out-of-role persons.

Method

Overview of Design

Subjects read a description of one of four undergraduates and evaluated the likability and similarity. They also judged the applicability to the character of a list of personality characteristics. Subjects in the "masculine" condition read a sketch of an independent person with leadership ability; subjects in the "feminine" condition read a sketch of a sensitive and compassionate person. Half of the subjects read about a man, half about a woman. Thus a 2 x 2 x 2 between-subjects design was used with sex role, sex of stimulus person, and sex of subject as the three factors. The dependent variables were ratings of likability, desirability, similarity, and traits of the stimulus person. Information about the subjects' sex-role ideology was obtained so that the relationship of this factor to likability ratings could be assessed.

Subjects

The subjects were 124 undergraduates at Stanford University, who were recruited from introductory classes in psychology and social psychology. The students were offered credit for their participation.

The data from four subjects were not used in the analyses due to incomplete ratings or booklet error. The final sample consisted of 120 subjects with 30 subjects (15 males and 15 females) assigned to each of the four sex-role-sex-of-

stimulus-person conditions. They ranged in age from 17 to 33 years and had an average age of 19.1 years ($SD = 2.6$).

Stimulus Persons

The stimuli consisted of a sketch of each of four fictitious persons, who differed in terms of their sex role and sex: a masculine man, feminine man, masculine woman, and feminine woman.

Two basic character sketches were created for a pilot study. One portrayed a masculine man who was independent and had leadership ability; the other described a feminine woman who was sensitive and compassionate. They were written so that these two in-role characters be perceived as equally likable and that their competence be established. The first two paragraphs of a sketch contained standard information that was identical for both characters. The first paragraph provided a profile of an average Stanford undergraduate; the second was composed of generalized statements about the student's personality derived from a horoscope booklet. The third paragraph contained the manipulation, in which sex-typed characteristics were operationalized. The particular aspects of masculinity and femininity that were manipulated were selected on the basis of the literature, consideration of contemporary issues, and pretest data.

These two descriptions were pretested on three samples of 20 undergraduates each (10 males and 10 females). Half of the samples read the sketch of the masculine man, and the rest read about the feminine woman. Then subjects were asked to rate the likability of the stimulus person using a 7-point scale. In the final pretest the two in-role characters were judged equally likable. The mean ratings of the masculine man and the feminine woman were 5.20 and 5.30, respectively ($SDs = 1.06$ and 1.03 , respectively); a t -test showed the difference was not significant.

In the actual experiment, the description of the masculine man read as follows:

Kevin is a senior majoring in psychology who transferred to Stanford last year. He lives in a coed dorm and feels that his college experience has triggered an enormous amount of personal and intellectual growth. He comes from a small town in Washington state, and it wasn't until he came to Stanford that he began to have contact with so many different kinds of people and life styles. He has a younger sister and brother with whom he is very close, but lately his relationship with his parents has grown somewhat distant.

Since coming to Stanford, Kevin has begun to pride himself as an independent thinker and he does not like to accept the opinions of others without satisfactory proof. He does like to engage in philosophical discussions with other people. But for relaxation, he usually prefers the company of a few good friends to a large crowd. Kevin is a warm person who makes friends easily. He very much likes people to like and admire him.

Following this biographical information was a final paragraph describing the masculine role:

Perhaps the most noteworthy thing about Kevin is his independence and leadership ability. After transferring to Stanford, he was first denied several units of credit for courses that he had taken at his other school. But due to his perseverance, he was finally able to receive full credit for his work. Firm in his belief that he can determine the course of his life,

he is the type of person who sets challenging goals for himself and usually manages to accomplish them, regardless of the obstacles. He enjoys having a leadership role and he frequently takes an active lead during mealtime conversations, meetings, and discussions. Because of these characteristics, people often look to Kevin for leadership, and he seldom disappoints them.

The description of the masculine woman was identical, except that the name "Karen" replaced "Kevin," and the appropriate pronouns were substituted.

The description of the feminine woman was the same as that for the masculine woman for the first two paragraphs but contained the following paragraph on the feminine role:

Perhaps the most noteworthy thing about Karen is her sensitivity and compassion. She is the kind of person who seems to have an inherent talent for knowing how other people feel, and, as a result, she is frequently in the position of advising friends with their personal problems. She is also serving as a resident adviser to a group of forty freshmen. She plays this role well because her sympathies are easily touched, and she responds instantly to any appeal for help. She is a good listener, and she is often able to detect changes in people's moods almost before they do. Because of these characteristics, people often turn to Karen when they have personal problems, and she seldom disappoints them.

The feminine man description was the same as that of the feminine woman, except that the name "Karen" was changed to "Kevin," and the appropriate pronouns were substituted.

Procedure

The experiment was conducted in group sessions within the lecture class or discussion sections. Subjects were randomly assigned to one of the four conditions. A female experimenter told the subjects that the study concerned impression formation when given minimal information about an individual. Subjects next read the written character sketch and rated the likability, desirability, and their similarity to the person described. Subjects then judged to what extent each of 50 personality characteristics was true of the stimulus person. A majority of subjects next completed a questionnaire about sex-role ideology, which was assessed by the full version of the Spence-Helmreich Attitudes toward Women Scale, or AWS (1972b). Each response to the 55 AWS statements was given a score from 1 to 4, with 1 representing the most traditional and 4 the most liberal and pro-feminist perspective. Thus, the score reflecting a subject's sex-role ideology could range from 55 to 220.

Dependent Variables

Likability, desirability, and similarity. The major dependent variable was a rating of likability of the stimulus as a person. Subjects were also asked how much they would like to be like (desirability) and how much they were like (similarity) the stimulus person. Ratings were made on a 7-point scale labeled "not at all" (1) to "very much" (7).

Trait ratings. Subjects were asked to rate how well each of 50 alphabetically listed traits applied to the stimulus person on a 7-point scale marked "not at all true" (1) to "very true" (7) with the intervals labeled. The list consisted of five categories of 10 traits each as follows: desirable masculine, desirable feminine, desirable neutral, undesirable masculine, and undesirable feminine traits.

It was developed after several hundred traits had been pretested and empirically classified as either positive or negative in value and either masculine, feminine, or neutral in sexual association. The procedure for selecting both the desirable and undesirable traits was basically similar to that for selecting items for the Bem Sex-Role Inventory (Bem, 1974).

There was general agreement on both the desirability and sex-typing of the three desirable trait categories. The desirable masculine traits selected were: acts as a leader, ambitious, assertive, competitive, defends own beliefs, does not give up easily, individualistic, self-reliant, strong-minded, and talented. Desirable feminine traits included affectionate, cheerful, eager to soothe hurt feelings, gentle, giving, innocent, soft-spoken, understanding, warm, and willing to make sacrifices for others. Conscientious, enthusiastic, ethical, good-natured, has a good sense of humor, imaginative, outgoing, perceptive, relaxed, and sincere composed the desirable neutral trait category.

Traits in the two undesirable categories were selected according to either of two criteria: (a) males or females judged the characteristic to be more undesirable for one sex than the other, or (b) males and females found the characteristic to be equally undesirable for both sexes. The following undesirable masculine traits were selected as more negative for women than men: anxious, argumentative, domineering, loud-mouthed, opinionated, overconfident, sarcastic, selfish, tactless, and under-handed. Undesirable feminine traits selected as more negative for men than women included excitable, gossipy, gullible, jealous, meddlesome, meek, moody, oversensitive, and tiresome.

The pretest ratings for the 10 traits in each of the five categories were combined into a summary mean. A comparison of means in the three desirable categories revealed no differences among them, indicating they were of equal desirability. A comparison of the means for the two undesirable categories revealed they were not significantly different, indicating both were equal in undesirability. Prior to analysis of the trait ratings, the 10 trait ratings in a category were combined into a summary mean, so that ultimately only five trait indices were used as dependent measures.

Results

Distinctiveness of the Sex Roles

The desirable masculine and desirable feminine trait indices served in part as a validation of the masculine-feminine role images created for the stimulus. It was expected that the characters described in the masculine role would be perceived as having more positive masculine attributes, while the feminine characters would be perceived as having more positive feminine traits.

Insert Table 1 about here

These expectations are strongly confirmed. Table 1 presents the mean ratings for the dependent variables, including the desirable masculine trait index. Undergraduates enacting the masculine role are rated as significantly more desirably masculine (5.88) than the feminine undergraduates (4.88). Analysis of variance conducted on this index shows a highly significant effect for sex role, $F(1, 112) = 58.98$, $p < .001$, indicating that the masculine characterizations are distinctively more masculine than the feminine characterizations. No other main effects or interactions are significant.

Also as predicted, the feminine roles are rated significantly higher (5.36) in terms of positive feminine attributes than the masculine roles (3.71) (see Table 1). As seen in Figure 1, a strong effect is again found for sex role, $F(1, 112) = 165.21, p < .001$, indicating that the feminine portrayals are presented as clearly more feminine than the masculine portrayals. A triple interaction also occurs on this index, but it will be discussed in the trait ratings section. These two results taken together show that the manipulation of sex role in the descriptions is perceived correctly, and the two roles are clearly differentiated on a masculine-feminine dimension.

Insert Figure 1 about here

Likability

Table 1 also shows the mean ratings for the major question concerning likability as a person. Analysis of the likability measure yields three significant results; however, the predicted interaction between sex or stimulus person and stimulus role does not occur. Subjects strongly distinguish between the likability of the masculine and feminine roles. The main effect of sex role indicates that independent of sex of stimulus person, the feminine persons are rated as more likable (5.68) than the masculine persons (5.00), $F(1, 112) = 11.80, p < .001$.

Male and female subjects also rate the stimulus person differently (5.08 and 5.60, respectively). The main effect of sex of subject indicates that independent of the sex-role-sex-of-stimulus-person description given, females perceive the stimulus persons as more likable than males do, $F(1, 112) = 6.75, p < .01$.

Insert Figure 2 about here

In addition to these two main effects, the Sex Role x Sex of Stimulus Person x Sex of Subject interaction is significant, $F(1, 112) = 4.39, p < .05$. As can be seen in Figure 2, the source of this interaction is the sharp difference in male and female evaluation of sex roles when the stimulus is a man, but similar evaluations when the stimulus is a woman. Male subjects rate the likability of the masculine man significantly lower than women do, $F(1, 112) = 14.86, p < .001$; males also judge this stimulus significantly less likable than the feminine man, $F(1, 112) = 16.18, p < .001$. It is the unusually low rating of likability of the masculine man by males that thus produces the interaction.

Effect of subjects' sex-role ideology. Sex-role ideology of the subject was examined for its influence on the likability ratings. Individuals possessing liberal attitudes about the roles of men and women were expected to like the out-of-role persons more than individuals with moderate or conservative attitudes. Subjects with scores in the upper third of the AWS distribution (187-216) were classified as liberal, those with scores in the middle third (163-186) as moderate, and those with scores in the bottom third (121-162) as conservative in their sex-role ideologies.

Insert Table 2 about here

There is no main effect for the sex-role ideology of the subject (see Table 2). The two main effects for sex role and sex of subject, which occurred in the previous analysis, emerge again in this analysis. There is also a significant Sex Role x Sex of Subject x Sex-Role Ideology interaction, $F(2, 74) = 3.06, p < .05$, which indicates that the sex-role ideology affects the likability ratings of the two sex

roles by males and females differently. Women received significantly higher AWS scores (181.08) than men (163.04), $t(96) = 4.48$, $p < .001$. While sex-role ideology does not clarify women's evaluation of the two sex roles, the ideology of men does. Men with moderate ideologies like both sex roles, but liberal and conservative men strongly value the feminine over the masculine role. Figure shows that this sex-role preference is particularly striking in the liberal males' negative evaluation of the masculine role.

Insert Figure 3 about here

Desirability

The mean ratings of desired similarity of subjects to the stimulus persons appear in Table 1. The main effect of sex role, $F(1, 112) = 9.00$, $p < .01$, reveals that independent of the stimulus sex, subjects desire to be more like the feminine undergraduates (4.68) than the masculine undergraduates (3.83). No other main effects or interactions are significant.

Similarity

A Sex Role $\times$ Sex of Stimulus Person $\times$ Sex of Subject interaction, $F(1, 112) = 4.27$, $p < .05$, in the analysis of the mean ratings of the similarity of the subject to the stimulus persons reveals significant differences in the subjects' identification with the masculine and feminine sex roles (see Table 1). Figure 4 demonstrates that the source of this interaction is the sharp difference in the ratings of the woman stimulus by male and female subjects, while little difference occurs in the ratings of the man stimulus. A simple effects analysis shows that subjects perceive themselves as more similar to the woman undergraduate whose role is consistent with their own sex, $F(1, 112) = 4.80$, $p < .03$. Males attribute greater similarity between themselves and the masculine woman, while females find more similarity with the feminine woman. Another simple effects analysis clarifies that the female subjects perceive themselves as significantly more similar to the feminine woman than the masculine woman, $F(1, 112) = 4.90$, $p < .03$. Thus, it is the females failing to identify with the masculine woman that is causing the interaction.

Insert Figure 4 about here

Trait Ratings

Results are presented separately for all trait indices but the desirable masculine index, whose only significant effect was previously discussed. It was expected that the favorable descriptions of the in-role persons would include attributing more desirable traits which are neutral in their sexual association than the out-of-role persons (Garske, 1972). It was also expected that there would be an exaggerated and negative evaluation of out-of-role individuals, in which masculine women would be perceived as possessing more undesirable masculine traits and feminine men would be characterized by more undesirable feminine traits than the other characters. In addition, it was expected that the attribution of traits to a deviant person would show evidence of a negative halo effect where the person would be viewed as possessing other negative, sex-typed attributes. The expectancies about the trait ratings are largely disconfirmed, but there are consistent patterns in the attributions to the masculine and feminine roles.

Desirable feminine traits. In addition to the main effect for sex role described earlier, an interaction occurs between the sex of stimulus person, the stimulus person's sex role, and the sex of subject on this trait index, $F(1, 112) = 4.47$,

$p < .05$, indicating that the sex role affects the evaluation of the stimulus by males and females. The source of this interaction is that males evaluating a masculine man rate him as having fewer desirable feminine traits than female subjects do (see Figure 1). A simple effects analysis indicates that this difference is significant, $F(1, 112) = 5.57, p < .02$.

Desirable neutral traits. It was predicted that in-role undergraduates would be perceived as having more positive neutral ratings than the out-of-role undergraduates, but this hypothesized interaction does not occur. The feminine persons are again perceived as having more desirable attributes, in this case neutral attributes, than the masculine undergraduates, $F(1, 112) = 16.82, p < .001$ (see Table 1). A main effect for sex of subject, $F(1, 112) = 6.59, p < .01$, reveals again that female subjects are more likely to attribute these types of characteristics to the stimulus than male subjects. No other main effects or interactions are significant.

Undesirable masculine traits. The data do not support the expectation that reaction to the masculine woman would be more negative and exaggerated than reaction to the masculine man (see Table 1). The same main effect for sex role, which has appeared consistently on the other measures, is found again for this index. It indicates that the masculine sex role is rated as encompassing significantly more undesirable masculine traits than the feminine role, $F(1, 112) = 60.74, p < .01$. There were no other significant main effects or interactions.

Undesirable feminine traits. Consistent with the subjects' positive ratings of the feminine role along the several other dimensions, they also fail to attribute more undesirable feminine traits to the feminine man than to the feminine woman. Analysis of variance conducted on this measure reveals no significant effects.

Discussion

The present study gives clear indication that sex-typed behavior in males and females is not perceived identically. Out-of-role performers were not, however, evaluated unfavorably nor in exaggerated terms relative to those in-role, as predicted by role theory. Instead, the most striking finding is that persons in a feminine role were rated positively on several dimensions. In contrast to previous studies substantiating a preference for more male-linked traits (e.g., Broverman, Broverman, Clarkson, Rosenkrantz, & Vogel, 1970; Broverman, Vogel, Broverman, Clarkson, & Rosenkrantz, 1972; McKee & Sherriffs, 1959; Rosenkrantz, Vogel, Bee, Broverman, & Broverman, 1968; Seyfried & Hendrick, 1973), the feminine characteristics were perceived as the most likable and most desirable in this study. Subjects also attributed more positive qualities that are applicable to either sex and failed to attribute negative feminine traits to the feminine persons. These results imply that as social consciousness about the content and socialization of sex roles has increased, the definitions of interpersonal attractiveness have broadened to include the previously devalued aspects of femininity in men as well as in women. One explanation for this anomalous positive perception of feminine persons and negative perception of masculine persons is the shifting, sociocultural emphasis since the 1960's on concern for and relating meaningfully to others. Thus, it is suggested that the female-typed qualities of sensitivity and compassion compound the likability of a stimulus person who is portrayed as similar to the subjects in the first paragraph of the sketch, competent and likable in the second paragraph, and feminine in the last, because they add the dimension of emotional closeness to others to an already positive description. But the male-typed qualities of independence and leadership ability detract from a person, however attractive, because such attributes imply a separateness and distance from others that is inherent in directing them.

Further, subjects identified comparably with the man stimulus but perceived differences in similarity to the woman stimulus. The undesirable masculinity in the woman stimulus deterred the women from identifying with this character, which parallels identical results with ratings of sex-role attitudes in a stimulus stranger (Seyfried & Hendrick, 1973). The data suggest acceptance by men but rejection by women of females acting independently and as leaders, which has implications for the perception of female supervisors and other women in positions of authority. It is notable that the feminine man who possesses both positive masculine and feminine traits, or is psychologically androgynous (Bem, 1974; Bird, 1968; Rossi, 1964, p. 130), received the highest likability rating of 5.80 on a 7-point scale.

The present study presents additional evidence for the tendency of women to evaluate other persons more highly than men. Women were more positive in expressing their feelings of attraction to the four characters about whom they read than men were, and they perceived more flattering traits than men did. This female pattern of rating the stimulus person more favorably is consistent with results from adults evaluating a child's personality and abilities (Gurwitz & Dodge, 1975). It suggests a halo effect in impression formation for females.

While the present data show that subjects with liberal sex-role ideologies do not evaluate the out-of-role stimulus persons as more likable than those in-role relative to subjects with moderate or conservative ideologies, it appears that the sample distribution of AWS scores shows a ceiling effect, which thereby cancels the hypothesized effect of sex-role ideology on likability ratings. Stanford students generally had highly liberal sex-role ideologies, as measured by the Spence-Helmreich instrument, which was standardized on a University of Texas student population. The average score of the Stanford subjects was 172.61, out of a possible 220, which falls in the upper fifth of the distribution.

It seems reasonable to assume, then, that the expected relationship between sex-role ideology and likability ratings may in fact hold true: Individuals with liberal attitudes about the roles of men and women may rate the out-of-role stimulus person higher in likability than individuals with conservative attitudes. Two explanations for why this prediction was not demonstrated are suggested. First, the results obtained may be due to an artifact in the instrument measuring sex-role ideology. The AWS norms were established on a Southern college population, which is likely to have more conservative sex-role views than a West Coast college population. In addition, irrespective of whether a liberal or conservative position is portrayed, 30 of the 55 items on the AWS are constructed with women as the subject or the focus of the statement to be evaluated. This emphasis on women suggests that the instrument is a better indicator of ideology about the roles of women than the roles of both sexes. A second explanation for the results may be that a university sample maximizes the liberal end of the distribution of sex-role attitudes.

It was interesting to discover upon completion of the data analysis that a virtually identical but independent study (Garske, 1972), which had entertained a parallel hypothesis about "typical and atypical sex-role behavior" in a similar experimental design unknowingly conducted in the same time period in Northern California, obtained the expected interaction between sex role and sex of stimulus person on sex-typed trait ratings. Garske, however, sampled a community college rather than a university student population. He also utilized a tape-recording of a male or female voice as a stimulus instead of a written description of a person

with a male or female name. Finally, he used a more consistently stereotypical but less realistic manipulation of sex role by selecting vivid and extreme contrasts of masculinity and femininity (Garske, 1972, pp. 142-149). These differences in method provide a less stringent test of the hypothesis, since such operationalizations of experimental elements virtually guarantees the perception of deviance in the out-of-role stimulus persons and the attribution of negative traits to them for such unexpected behavior.

In summary, the present study adds new information to the accumulating body of knowledge pertaining to the evaluation of performance of men and women. When considering adult performance, the stereotypic sex-role association of the behavior performed, the sex of performer, and the sex of subject are all important. It has been documented here that femininity is the preferred sex role in evaluating the likability of a person, and females give more positive evaluations than males. The present data indicate that there is a tendency to devalue masculinity on several dimensions, particularly in a man by male subjects with liberal sex-role attitudes. Based on evidence from past research which strongly supports the male bias, however, it is unlikely that this preference for femininity, particularly in a man, would hold true if tested with a more varied sample from the general population, as the following letter to "Dear Abby" (Van Buren, 1972) suggests:

Dear Abby:

So women want men who are "understanding, compassionate, and forgiving"? Well, I was married for 26 years. Then my wife left me saying, "I simply can't stand a man who is so understanding, compassionate, and forgiving."

We've been divorced for five years, and since then I have treated women like dirt and they love it!

Ex-Saint.

There is also evidence in the study that the relationship between the likability of out-of-role persons and the sex-role ideology of the rater may indeed hold in a sample with a greater range of attitudes toward the roles of men and women or using a different instrument. Finally, the present results provide a refinement of the methodology of past research by pretesting the stimulus material and trait ratings; and they offer a new perspective from which predictions can be made regarding the way in which a person will be perceived and evaluated if he or she steps out of the traditional bounds of role-related behavior. It is possible that these results reflect a real change in sex-role stereotypes in this society, which should be explored further. Another step for future investigations would be to test whether the bias toward femininity in person perception occurs in the evaluation of actual behavior of men and women and if so, under what conditions. The question remains, then, as to whether the actions of others toward independent women and sensitive men have changed as quickly as general attitudes, masculinity and femininity.

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Table 1
Mean Dependent Variable Ratings for Different Stimulus Persons

Dependent variables	Stimulus persons			
	Masculine man	Feminine man	Masculine woman	Feminine woman
Male subjects				
Desirable masculine traits	5.67	4.82	5.85	4.77
Desirable feminine traits	3.36	5.49	3.65	5.15
Likability as a person	4.13	5.73	5.07	5.40
Desirability	4.00	5.13	3.47	4.20
Similarity	3.87	4.47	4.27	3.87
Desirable neutral traits	4.29 ^a	5.19	4.69	4.67
Undesirable masculine traits	4.41	2.68	4.07	3.07
Female subjects				
Desirable masculine traits	6.02	4.96	5.96	4.95
Desirable feminine traits	3.97	5.23	3.85	5.57
Likability as a person	5.67	5.87	5.13	5.73
Desirability	4.20	4.67	3.67	4.73
Similarity	3.93	4.07	3.47	4.47
Desirable neutral traits	5.01	5.29	4.80	5.40
Undesirable masculine traits	3.57	2.65	3.95	2.87

Note. The higher the mean value, the greater the applicability of traits to the stimulus person, likability, desirability, or similarity, respectively; maximum value = 7; $n = 15$ for each condition.

^a $n = 14$.

Table 2
 Mean Ratings of Likability as a Person for Stimulus Persons
 in Masculine and Feminine Sex Roles by Subjects
 With Liberal, Moderate, and Conservative Sex-Role Ideologies

Sex role	Sex of subject					
	<u>n</u>	Males	<u>n</u>	Females	<u>n</u>	Total
Masculine						
Liberal	4	3.50	11	5.82	15	5.20
Moderate	8	5.13	10	5.20	18	5.17
Conservative	12	4.67	5	5.20	17	4.83
Feminine						
Liberal	3	5.53	13	6.08	16	5.98
Moderate	6	4.83	10	5.80	16	5.44
Conservative	13	5.92	3	5.00	16	5.75
Both sex roles						
Liberal	7	4.29	24	5.96	31	5.58
Moderate	14	5.00	20	5.50	34	5.29
Conservative	25	5.32	8	5.13	33	5.27
Total	46	5.07	52	5.65	98	5.38

Note. The higher the mean value, the greater the likability; maximum value = 7.



Figure 1. Mean ratings of desirable feminine traits for stimulus persons as a function of sex role, sex of stimulus, and sex of subject.



Figure 2. Mean ratings of likability of stimulus persons as a function of sex role, sex of stimulus, and sex of subject.

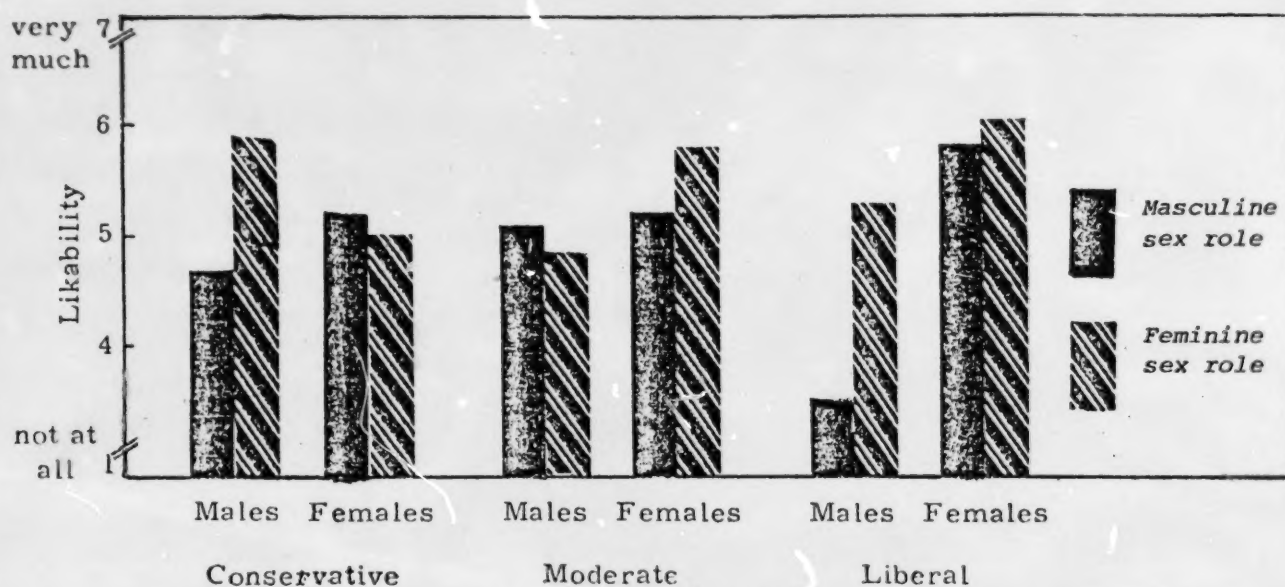


Figure 3. Mean ratings of likability of stimulus persons as a function of sex role, sex of subject, and subject sex-role ideology.



Figure 4. Mean ratings of perceived subject-stimulus person similarity as a function of sex role, sex of stimulus, and sex of subject.